



The South India CHURCHMAN

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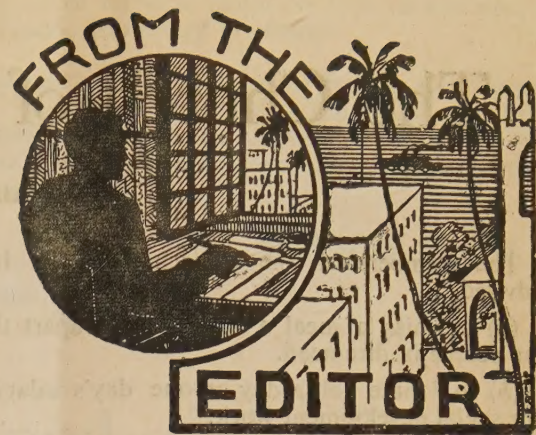
1976 Synod Session

Reports of twenty-three Commissions and Committees as well as about one hundred resolutions were received, discussed, passed and at times referred to the Executive Committee for action. Besides these, there were three Bible Studies on the theme 'Jesus Christ frees and unites', two main addresses, panel discussions, group discussions, worship services, entertainment and a public reception at the time of the fifteenth session of the synod of the Church of South India which took place in January at Tiruchirapalli. The delegates had a very busy time indeed and it must be said to their credit that all the sessions were well attended.

Two dozen overseas delegates, most of them representing Western missionary or Service Agencies attended the synod. The synod was extremely happy to receive them. However, there were no visitors or representatives from Asia, Africa or Latin America. We do not seem to know how to forge relationships with churches in the neighbouring countries. At present the relationships seem to rest exclusively on the narrow concept of mission, namely, sending and receiving money and personnel. Almost the only contact we have with churches in Asia is through the Western Mission Boards or through organisations like the W.C.C. or C.C.A. We hope that at the next synod there will be a sizeable number of guests from churches of the so-called Third World. Only about twenty-five per cent or even less than that number participated in the deliberations. If expression through English is a difficulty, the delegates must feel absolutely free and at ease to speak through one of the four languages. The synod must declare English, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu as official languages at the session. Although it may take time for translation, it will promote participation by many.

One of the liveliest sessions was the one addressed by Her Excellency Mrs. Madhuben Shah, wife of the Governor of Tamil Nadu. She was apparently well versed and extremely knowledgeable. She was thought provoking, blunt and frank in her comments. The delegates were informed that it was for the first time a person, (and a lady at that) belonging to the major Faith in India was invited to speak at the synod session. The intention of the officers was to get from her practical suggestions in implementing programmes of action based on the theme and discussions. Unfortunately it did not materialise and perhaps we were wrong in our expectation. Because of protocol and courtesies it was difficult for questions to be raised and discussed. Thus however valuable the visit was yet it did not serve the purpose as mentioned in the programme. But the occasion was certainly worthwhile.

The delegates expressed a genuine concern for the oppressed and the poorest of our nation. There was agony and frustration at the gap between the pronouncements through resolutions and actual practice. There was a sustained plea for concrete action. The delegates struggled to find out ways for the Church to identify itself with the oppressed, to be creative and along with the people to bring human dignity to all. Serious discussions about methods took place in groups and a number of suggestions were made. Out of all these came the proposal for a 'life Style' to be recommended to the members of the Church of South India. Though the wordings of the actual proposals were hastily drawn and hurriedly passed yet they provide a challenge for concrete action. These proposals, we hope, will be widely circulated and that the people would be encouraged to adopt them. It provides an opportunity for individuals to practise and thus express their personal concern. During



the biennium the proposals could be altered or added according to the conditions in the different dioceses and the Church would learn considerably through such experiences. In addition to that personal identification, efforts are to be made for changes in our Christian institutions so that they would be instruments in promoting justice and human dignity.

The debates on the questions on women were vigorous. It must have been partly due to the impact of the various articles, meetings and conferences in connection with the 'International Year for Women'. It is a matter of joy that two important resolutions significantly affecting the life of the church were passed. It was a momentous occasion when the synod declared men and women to be 'both equally eligible for the ordained ministry of the church' and passed the needed constitutional amendments. Secondly towards a more active participation of women the synod adopted as 'a general policy that in all committees, commissions and councils of the C.S.I. dioceses and the synod not less than 25% membership shall be women'. Great efforts are still to be taken to successfully implement these important decisions. The women have to assert their rights and participate fully in all the elections. They need not fight but their mere presence and voting can bring a very high percentage to the pastorate, diocesan and other committees. There will be endless discussions and even controversies over the subject on the ordination of women. At the same time we hope there will be charity and understanding. The feelings of people who want woman to be ordained in their places must be respected. An ordained woman who is on the faculty of one of the theological colleges in South India attended the synod session as a visitor from another church. Is it too much to hope for at least a few women clergy delegates at the next session of the synod?

The delegates were made aware of the crisis which a number of dioceses seem to be facing. A lack of pastoral care, acute financial problems, sharing of responsibilities and leadership, and a number of other matters pertaining to the life of the church were discussed. For lack of time the issues were not systematically discussed, but as a result of the general consensus it was decided to appoint a commission to go into the total life of the church embracing all the facets, to study in depth and report to the next synod with definite recommendations. Many remember with gratitude the late Dr. R. D. Paul's report of 'Renewal and Advance'. A difficult task lies ahead for the commission as it is expected to produce a similar comprehensive report.

The historic fifteenth session of the synod will have a special meaning for the members of the new diocese of Vellore. More than all these the synod called for committed action by every member and we pray God for a deepening faith which will undergird and sustain us through the next biennium.

The Church of South India-15th Synod

January 13th to 17th, 1976

The members of the Church of South India were advised

(a) to miss a meal a week and set apart that money for people in dire need.

(b) to donate half a day or one day's salary a month for social development work.

(c) to invite once a month one of the poorest families in the community to sit and share a common meal at the same table.

(d) to meet once a week for Bible Study and during the other three weeks for studies of the current affairs. These formed part of a 'life style' adopted by 344 delegates, visitors and observers, including 24 from overseas countries who participated in the 15th Synod of the Church of South India which met from the 13th to the 17th January 1976 at Bishop Heber College premises in Tiruchirapalli.

Having 'Jesus Christ Frees and Unites' as its main theme, the Synod expressed concern at the unjust structures and powerful exploitative forces, operating in the country as well as in the Church. A uniform law of succession for all the citizens was advocated. The church was asked to distribute its unused or unusable land and property to the under-privileged for house sites. It was decided to take a strong stand against those who acquire wealth through illegal and anti-social means such as black marketing, hoarding and profiteering. The Executive Committee was requested to constitute a competent committee to go into every aspect of Church life, to evaluate the work and study the various problems faced by the dioceses and to submit its report to the next Synod. It was further asked to suggest ways and means to meet the financial crisis faced by some of the churches and at the same time proposals to enhance the salaries of the diocesan workers.

In so far as the 20-point programme of the Prime Minister and her Government is intended to make a significant contribution towards the amelioration of the conditions of the poor and the oppressed, the synod called upon the dioceses and members of the Church to fully co-operate with the Government in the implementation of the programme. At the same time the synod pleaded for a more radical and economic programme to bring about a structure of justice meaningful for all the sections of the people. The Synod expressed its appreciation of the assurance given by the Prime Minister about the government's commitment to preserve the democratic structure of the constitution and to seek only certain changes as would promote the interests of the weaker sections of the people. As freedom of communication is essential the synod appealed to the Prime Minister and to the Government to withdraw the present restrictions on the freedom of the press and the fundamental rights as early as possible. It further appealed to the Prime Minister and the Government to accord the political prisoners fair means of justice.

In his presidential address the Moderator questioned 'can we rest content when millions of our countrymen

are denied the basic necessities which make life worth living?' He emphasised that 'if the church should continue and fulfil the ministry of Jesus Christ the present patterns of ministry and structure of the church must undergo radical changes'. Mrs. Daisy Gopal Ratnam, the honorary general secretary presented a detailed report covering the various activities carried out by the synod during the last biennium. Dr. Victor Premasagar, Principal of Andhra Theological College, Secunderabad, took three Bible Studies on the theme during the daily Holy Communion Services. In his main theme address Dr. Samuel Amirtham talked about the comprehensiveness of liberation and said that liberation includes (a) economic justice and freedom from material want, (b) political freedom and restoration of human rights, (c) cultural self-determination and affirmation of human dignity, (d) overcoming alienation of persons from persons and groups from groups and achievement of human community and 'therefore it is for the whole man, for the whole of humanity in the whole world'.

History was made when the synod declared 'that men and women are both equally eligible for the ordained ministry of the church and authorised the dioceses to recruit, train and ordain women to the office of presbyters'. Two-thirds of the diocesan councils have to ratify this decision which would allow the dioceses to ordain women as priests in the church. Further the Synod adopted as a general policy to reserve wherever possible in all committees, commissions and councils of the dioceses and in the synod not less than 25% membership for women and not less than one-third of the total membership for youth.

Through an Amendment the synod has made it mandatory for the bishops to retire at the age of 65. The possibility of a limited term for the bishops as well as transfers were also considered at the synod.

The Synod gave its approval for the bifurcation of the diocese of Madras and the new diocese of Vellore will be inaugurated on the 26th of January 1976. The new diocese will have 55,000 members and its headquarters will be at Vellore. The Central Church will be the Cathedral Church of the diocese. The Church of South India has a total membership of 1.6 million people in its 18 dioceses.

The synod was honoured by the presence and participation by Her Excellency Srimathi Madhuben Shah, the First lady of the State on Friday the 16th. Her thought-provoking speech and candid answers were appreciated by all. Praising the high standard of service of the missionaries she emphasised the common humanity of all the people united by the single purpose of serving God. She pleaded for a balanced mind and a right attitude towards the neighbour in fulfilling one's duties. On the evening of the 16th a public reception was given by the Trichy-Tanjore Diocese and the Tiruchirapalli Municipality to Her Excellency Srimathi Madhuben Shah, the Moderator, the officers and the delegates of the Synod. Late in the evening on the same day a festival of evangelism took place at which Dr. Telfer Mook, Asia Secretary

United Church Board for World Ministries, New York, gave a message. The delegates were entertained by Suvantha Vani, Vijayawada and the different choirs and schools in Tiruchi.

The following were re-elected as the officers of the synod: The Rt. Rev. Ananda Rao Samuel, Moderator; The Rt. Rev. Solomon Doraisawmi, Deputy Moderator;

Mrs. Daisy Gopal Ratnam, Honorary General Secretary; Mr. P. I. Chandy, Honorary Treasurer.

The practical arrangements made for the synod were excellent. Everyone who attended the synod was full of praise and thanks for the untiring efforts of the Rt. Rev. Solomon Doraisawmi and his colleagues for all the help and co-operation.

ALEXANDER D. JOHN

Impressions of the 15th Synod of the C.S.I.

This is the fourth C.S.I. Synod which I have attended over a span of 14 years. Of the prior Synods, I recall most vividly the 1964 Synod in Secunderabad when the renewal and advance report was being considered by the Synod. It would not be fair to trust my memory in making any specific comparisons to prior Synod meetings, yet the gracious welcome and hospitality to overseas visitors stands out clearly in all the Synod meetings I have attended.

At this Synod I have been impressed by the serious and stimulating adherence to the Synod theme: *'Jesus Christ Frees and Unites'*. It has been obvious that this theme, patterned after the Nairobi Assembly of the World Council of Churches theme, has been taken as more than a slogan. This has been demonstrated throughout the entire Synod, in the Moderator's address, in the significant paper by Dr. Samuel Amirtham, in the Bible Studies by Dr. Victor Premsagar and in many of Synod's discussions.

Closely related to this theme has been the focus on Liberation from structures of injustice and the commitment as a Church to assume an active role in sharing the liberation we have in Jesus Christ. It is clear that this has had far more attention than in previous Synods which I have attended. There has been courageous wrestling with this concern and a sincere attempt to bring Christ's freedom to the oppressed in local communities and most villages.

I am impressed by the honesty and openness of the Synod in facing the implications of unjust structures and power within the C.S.I. itself. This was evidenced by proposals for broader representation in Synod Committees, on possible limitation of years of service by the Bishops, and by group discussion on necessary changes in the church during the small group discussions in the sections.

At this Synod there has been far less discussion on priorities, particularly as these relate to assistance from

churches and agencies from abroad. I do not understand this to mean that the C.S.I. no longer desires such partnership in mission. It has been encouraging to hear the firm statements that the C.S.I. wishes to decide the nature and conditions of any outside assistance. Also, one heard repeated expressions that reliance on overseas assistance must be decreased. I have been impressed by the commitment to do more than pass resolutions, a common weakness of most church gatherings. In a section meeting, a Synod delegate expressed concern that the emphasis on structures of injustice would be forgotten by most delegates as soon as they passed through the gates of Bishop Heber College and returned to their homes. Constantly, officers and delegates have requested the Synod that resolutions, if they have any meaning, must be practical enough to be implemented at the grass-roots level.

The amount of time given by the Synod to listen to, and dialogue with Her Excellency Srimathi Madhuben Shah, wife of the Governor of Tamil Nadu evidences that the C.S.I. does not rush to meet in a cloistered sitting. This indicates a heartening desire by the Church to face the world and be faced by those outside its membership.

The outstanding leadership of Synod's officers, the charismatic role of the Moderator in all the sessions, the free participation by the delegates has been notable. The careful and thoughtful preparation by the Deputy-Moderator and well organised plan for hosting the Synod evidences the efforts of many within the Trichy-Tanjore Diocese. This has certainly enhanced the sessions of this Synod. In spite of problems and difficulties facing the C.S.I., which have been cordially acknowledged throughout the Synod I salute the C.S.I. for its courageous facing of the challenges of this hour in history. For me, sharing in this Synod has polished up the hope for the future of the C.S.I. in its ministry for Christ in this great country!

JOHN E. BUTEYN

Secretary for World Ministries,
Reformed Church in America.

Impressions of the Synod

It was Synod, after six years, for me. Apart from the appreciation one felt for the well-planned organisation of the whole meeting, there seemed to be obvious a greater desire and willingness to co-operate and come to a consensus—and this seemed truly natural and spontaneous. There were of course as usual, the enthusiastic few who tended to monopolise the debate and floor discussions preventing the desired participation of the majority—perhaps something to be expected and accepted. The only way to provide for the participation of the many may be only by insisting on the 'three minute' ceiling, and the 'only twice per session' freedom of the floor, allowing for exceptions where absolutely necessary.

There seemed also prevalent a persistent call for action rather than recommendations—perhaps because of which the Synod came one step closer to action through some more realistic and practical recommendations—though recommendations they still remain to be.

Women and young people, elected and nominated, were again very few and far between. Women delegates were six in nearly 250 voting members, and younger delegates a similar handful. The Theological Commission's resolution therefore to adopt a general policy to provide for at least 25% seats for women, and one-third for younger people in all committees and councils at diocesan and synod levels, *wherever possible* (notwithstanding) we hope will be the first step in the right direction. The final responsibility of the practical implementation of this will devolve on the bishops, whose watchfulness and insistence except where impossible, will alone see this become a reality.

Similarly, the resolution regarding the ordination of women, recommending that men and women being both equally eligible, the dioceses be authorised to recruit, train and ordain women; encourage women to take more active part in the preaching ministry; and to involve both men and women in the ministrations—the almost unanimous acceptance of this came as a surprise in spite of the co-operative atmosphere prevailing for accepting recommendations. This removal of discrimination will be received with great joy by women all over C.S.I. The Church will now have to evolve a pattern in which women can participate for the enrichment of the church, and their particular abilities can be used to the full in the service of God's people. I only pray that this will not be interpreted by both men and women as the immediate ordaining of women to be presbyters in charge of parishes! Full-time youth work, Sunday School, Counselling, and Guidance, Hospital chaplaincy may be some of the areas where women can be used to advantage.

Criticism was provoked because no papers for synod were received in advance. This, it was found, was due to dioceses and committees not sending in reports—even given six months' notice. One committee had not even met. That brings us to the age-old question—need we elect or nominate members to committees (even councils or synods) who are too busy to meet or attend?

If the agenda, reports and recommendations are circulated well ahead of time—and it seems to me this should be the pattern of the future—then delegates could come to the synod, informed and prepared to ask only the necessary questions; important resolutions and matters alone could occupy the time and debate of the members, and this could be handled so as to lead on to definite action.

The great effort and labour behind some reports seemed a waste because of lack of time to do anything beyond accepting them. I have in mind the Report on Statistics, which seems to me of much too much importance to ignore. A proper study of this raises a hundred questions. Will they never be asked? For instance, why are more than one-fourth of our baptised Christians, adults, who are *not* communicants? The same was true in 1972. Again, there are over 32,550 unbaptised children over the age of two. Again, almost 60% of our baptised children under 16 years, are *not* in Sunday school. Literacy for the whole of the C.S.I. comes to about 50% average. For some dioceses it is appalling. Why are *only* 59% of our Christian children in school? What is the church doing beyond providing the data? Can we resolutely and steadily work towards *every* C.S.I. child being in school? And every diocese cutting its *illiteracy* figure by half? And set a deadline—next synod? What steps will the church take in its concern for unbaptised children, children not in Sunday School, adults not in full membership, and its migrating young people? These are only some of the questions. What is the church's responsibility in this? Will reports continue to be presented every biennium, and conditions and problems of the church continue to remain unchanged and untackled till they only become worse?

References were being made all the time to social justice and equity of distribution. There was also a missing of a supper one night and donating the money to the Leper association. Would it have been more effective witness for the synod as a body, to have eschewed, at every meal, all but simple and reasonably necessary food? Would that be a pattern worth emulating as future policy, at all meetings, at all levels?

We worshiped every morning in a beautiful tabernacle built at immense cost. To the man on the street, would our talk of social justice and redeeming love within costly worship centres pose a problem? Should we in this country spend on costly churches? On unnecessary cost of any kind for that matter? Personally, I do not think we should build any more churches, except as in rural areas where there is no worship centre at all—and then, as simple and inexpensive as possible, and to serve more purposes than one. Existing churches should be used by more than one congregation, and through a variety of programmes, many days in the week. Then will we be truly worshipping. To me, to worship is to serve. May it not be said that ours is a church which worships only with words; but truly with service as well.

VIMALA ARANGADEN

Lessons from Nairobi

Several reports of the Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Nairobi have already appeared in Christian periodicals. What I say here is by way of reflection on what the Assembly has indicated about the state of the Churches in the World today and what we may learn about the directions indicated by the Nairobi meeting.

One obvious fact about the Assembly was that it was the most representative of different sections of the Churches compared to the earlier assemblies. The delegates present at Nairobi represented more member churches (271) and more countries (100) and had more youth (10% under the age of 30), more women (20%) and more lay people (40%) than any previous assembly. The membership of the World Council of Churches continues to be growing and at Nairobi 8 new churches were admitted as members and 7 others as associate members.

Some of the predictions about the Assembly did not come true. As the Assembly was nearing several groups preparing for the Assembly in different parts of the world thought that at Nairobi there was going to be some exciting confrontations, between the third world delegates and those from the affluent western countries, between radicals and conservatives, and between delegates from socialist and non-socialist countries. But actually no serious confrontation took place. Compared to the Uppsala Assembly, the Nairobi Assembly had a much quieter atmosphere.

Whereas at Uppsala the youth made radical demands for social action and new life styles, at Nairobi the youth hardly made any significant impact. They were, on the whole, more interested in new forms of spirituality, aesthetics, meditation, music, dance and the like rather than in radical social action. Perhaps this is reflective of the mood of youth all over the world today. A new period of protest against the radicalism of the earlier generation is evident. At Nairobi itself echoes of different interpretations of this phenomenon were heard, namely, wilderness following the exodus or consolidation following prophetic revolt. Some also suggested that the present mood is the result of the wide gap between the mere verbalism of a great deal of radicalism and the radical action of the few individuals and groups who have faced much suffering.

The gap in ecumenical education of the churches was also very evident at this Assembly. For example one Orthodox delegate from USA made the same speech at one of the section meetings on his understanding of the visible unity of the Church which he had delivered at the Faith and Order Conference at Montreal in 1963. He was unaware of the progress in inter-church relations which had happened since then through ecumenical dialogues on Faith and Order issues.

The fact that about 80% of the participants at Nairobi were attending an Assembly for the first time, with a higher percentage of youth, and lay persons also constituted some difficulties. Apart from their lack of familiarity with the procedures and the mechanics of an assembly of

this size many were also unfamiliar with some of the ecumenical concerns. One younger delegate voicing the opinion of many openly complained that the Assembly was being dominated by the staff, the Advisers and other non-delegates and that the delegates needed liberation from the Administrative structure of the Assembly.

Another disappointing feature of the Assembly was what appeared to be a subtle or even explicit attempt by some to pull the World Council back to a more conservative position, theologically as well as socially and politically. The lobbying for membership in the new Central Committee indicated the concern of some to gain a dominant position for the West European and American churches. They seemed to be worried about the growing influence of churches from the socialist and third world countries. The organised effort of a number of Western Church leaders to substitute Metropolitan Nikodim of the Russian Orthodox Church in the new Presidium of the W.C.C. by some one of their choice did not give a good account of the Christian fellowship of the Council. Fortunately they did not succeed. The discussion on the failure of the Soviet Union to implement fully the human rights clauses of the Helsinki Agreement on European Security also revealed inadequate understanding and fellowship among member churches of the Council. Many showed little interest in listening to what the churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America, had to say. The All Africa Christian Conference had arranged an excellent programme on *The African Challenge* which included a play by a well known Ghanaian playwright called *Muntu*. This play had some profound insights about African history, Christian faith and the meaning of Christ for Africa today. But it was very critical of some aspects of traditional Christian Missions, particularly their involvement with colonialism. Instead of entering into a creative dialogue on what the Africans were trying to say, quite a number of participants from Europe and America reacted rather negatively and said that this play only misrepresented all that had been meant by the Christian Mission. Efforts were also evident on the part of many western participants to reestablish a rather traditional and conservative concept of evangelism. One of the spokesmen of the Conservative position, Rev. John Stott of U.K., in his response to the main address on Evangelism by Bishop Arias of the Methodist Church of Bolivia, presented the rather unbiblical view that all the two billion people who have not yet heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ are lost. Surprisingly many at the Assembly subscribed to this view. In another discussion on Dialogue with other faiths some delegates from Western Churches took a negative authoritarian position assuming that their formulation of the Gospel was normative and in defence of their position raised the old bogey of syncretism. In spite of strong protest from Asian and other participants, the Assembly agreed to keep the preamble to the report of Section III dealing with this subject which explicitly warns the churches against syncretism while adopting the dialogue approach. Another evidence of pull back to a conservative position is the tendency in several of the Assembly reports to regard socialism and capitalism as just two alternate socio-economic systems, equally respectable and equally subject to corruption. This is quite a serious departure

from the earlier ecumenical trend, starting with the 1937 Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State, of exposing the exploitative character of capitalism. Even though we cannot absolutise any particular socio-economic structure, justice lies in the direction of socialism and away from capitalism.

In order that our continuing fellowship in the World Council of Churches may be meaningful and creative, it is important that we are aware of the different currents at work lest we be dominated and carried away by the interests and false fears and hopes of the churches of the West, both Protestant and Orthodox. Churches in all the 'three worlds' need to listen to one another and learn from one another in order that all together can listen and be obedient to our Common Lord. Only all obeying together and bringing the treasures of the different cultures and religious and spiritual heritages will constitute the one people of God. This awareness is important for the Churches in India as they seek to understand their role in the ecumenical movement.

In spite of the trends to pull back to a more conservative position and to reaffirm normativeness of the well established white churches of the West, the Assembly has been an experience of the Risen Lord meeting with his people and calling them to go forward with him. Reflecting on some of the negative features at the Assembly and the tensions within the ecumenical fellowship one African participant asked in a work group, 'I came to this Assembly hoping I will have an experience of the presence of Christ. Tell me where I can experience him.' It may not be possible to refer to any particular incident, or experience or statement as the evidence of the presence of Christ for all. Different participants would have confronted the presence of Christ in different ways. Many were challenged by the prophetic insights of the plenary addresses while others found the experiences in Work Groups, Sections and Worship sessions the high points of their confrontation with Christ. The plea of Dr. M. M. Thomas the Moderator of the Assembly for a new 'spirituality for Combat', the call of Dr. Philip Potter the General Secretary for a 'New Covenant relationship' between the member churches at all levels and the Council so that 'the whole Church can bring the whole Gospel to the whole human being in the whole world' were certainly high points of the Assembly for most participants. The prophetic word was also heard by many in the addresses of Dr. Robert McAfee Brown calling for a recognition that 'there is an increasing convergence between the Biblical view of Jesus as Liberator and the cry of the oppressed peoples for Liberation' Professor Charles Birch making a plea for 'a sustainable global society' and Prime Minister Michael N. Manley of Jamaica calling for the removal of all inequalities and injustices through a pattern of democratic socialism in which the economic enterprises will have only workers and no master. Through such variety of experiences the Assembly has arrived at decisions and statements which help the Churches to reaffirm their common calling in Christ. When these statements, recommendations and decision are seriously considered by the churches for implementation the result will certainly be a moving forward and not pulling backward.

Fear had been expressed that there might be a withdrawal of two of the important programmes adopted following the Uppsala Assembly, namely the Programme to combat Racism and the Dialogue with other Faiths and Ideologies. But the Assembly with overwhelming majority voted to continue both these programmes.

The decision to ask the churches to observe one Sunday as Ecumenical Sunday both for the raising of funds and for ecumenical education at grassroot level, if implemented imaginatively, will contribute to the deepening of the ecumenical commitment of the churches.

The programme guidelines adopted by the Assembly for the coming seven year period are all forward looking reaffirmation of the Council's commitment to unity, witness and service. All programmes of the WCC should be conceived and implemented in a way which enables the member churches to grow towards a truly ecumenical, conciliar fellowship. All programmes should be implemented in a way that engages the churches in the effort to reach a common understanding of the Gospel and the Tradition, to make possible a fuller common witness. All programmes should be conceived and implemented in a way that expresses the basic Christian imperative to participate in the struggle for human dignity and social justice, maintaining the integrity of action as rooted in the Biblical faith.' in the guidelines have also indicated some specific areas of concern for the WCC, namely, human rights, including religious freedom, racism, sexism, church involvement in unjust structures, non-violent action for social change, militarism, and search for a just and sustainable society.

The different reports which will be sent out as study documents also contain many challenging insights. Let me just mention a few. The report of Section III on '*Seeking Community the Common Search of People of Various Faiths, Cultures and Ideologies*' has these words:

'Many erroneously associate the term *ideology* only with Marxism. Christians ought always to scrutinize sensitively and critically their own perhaps unconscious ideological presuppositions.'

The report of Section V on *Structure of Injustice and Struggles for Liberation* has these statements:

'No rights are possible without the basic guarantees for life, including the right to work, to adequate food, to guaranteed health care, decent housing and education for the full development of human potential.'

'No religious community should plead for its own religious liberty without active respect and reverence for the faith and basic human rights of others.' 'Religious freedom should also include the right and duty of religious bodies to criticise the ruling powers when necessary on the basis of their religious convictions.'

The report of Section VI on *Human Development Ambiguities of Power Technology and Quality of Life* calls for a Christ inspired asceticism recognising 'that the quality of life does not consist in the abundance of *mere having* but in our *being* in relationship with the Father and with our brothers and sisters . . . We as Christians must recognize that the ultimate test of the quality of life on earth is the obedient sacrifice of costly Christian discipleship. And as such, Christians live according to an ethic of self-giving and self-limiting, as fully exemplified by our Lord Jesus Christ who is both divine and human.' The report further affirmed that 'Christ calls us to conversion, to a radical recognition of our human predicament, and to a new orientation in which we would be open to each other, to nature and to God. He calls us out of bondage of our own obsessive self-seeking to a true liberty of the children of God.'

For me, therefore, the Assembly was primarily an event which both exposed the human situation in which the churches are inextricably involved and brought home a fresh mandate for the churches to renew their

covenant with Christ to go forward to realise their oneness in the fulfilment of Christ's mission in the world to redeem man out of his personal as well as socio-political predicament.

Dr. J. R. CHANDRAN

Nairobi 1975

(This Article is made up of the transcripts of two INTERVOX programme items, recorded during the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, held in Nairobi, November 23-December 10, 1975.)

Narrator: Two and a half thousand people, delegates, fraternal delegates, advisers, observers, guests and visitors from all over the world, in addition to hundreds of visitors from Kenya itself, came together in Nairobi, Kenya's capital, for the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches. For two and a half weeks the participants put the World Council into scaffolding to take a closer look at the present state of the ecumenical movement. Of course, the truly international character of such an assembly in all its colourfulness and catholicity could hardly be detached from the fact that in order to make it *international*, hundreds of people had each come out of *local* and *national* situations. It was to local ecumenism and also to local evangelism that the assembly—among other things—devoted its attention. Dr. Philip Potter, in his general secretary's report, was one of several who underlined this.

Potter: The World Council . . . must never be allowed to forget that its *raison d'être* is to be God's instrument for supporting and enabling the churches, in communication with each other, to be the Church in place and in all places . . . The credibility of the ecumenical movement depends upon the active engagement of every church and every congregation.

Narrator: The World Council's general secretary, in his wide-ranging analysis of the state of the world today, spoke of the malaise of the human person.

Potter: People are gripped with fear . . . people feel so alienated from themselves and from one another that they are unable to trust each other. They create, or hide themselves behind, walls of non-communication with other persons and peoples . . . It is my hope and prayer that . . . we shall be guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit to receive afresh that liberation in Christ which will bind us closer together and send us forth to be messengers in word and deed of the freedom and unity which Christ gives and *wills* to give to the whole human family.

Narrator: Afterwards I talked with Philip Potter and asked him which issues he would identify as being the most significant, not only at the assembly but also for the churches in the years to come.

Potter: The churches are now faced with the challenge to understand and confess their faith in Jesus Christ in ways that are relevant for today, particularly in a day when we are faced with the threat to our human

existence in all kinds of ways—the gap between the rich and the poor, the limits to growth, the pollution of the environment, the arms race which is getting worse and worse, and all these things which make people despair and feel hopeless. What they need are the *resources* for understanding and facing these things, and participating in challenging their societies about the values by which they live and the call to a quality of life which is *inclusive*, including others rather than *excluding* them. This is the kind of thing that was essential to the assembly and which will be the agenda for the churches for quite a while. And, of course, it also raises the question how Christians confess their faith in a manner which will be *good news* to people. That's the whole evangelism question which has to be faced by churches in each place, and together.

Narrator: How—if at all—was the Nairobi Assembly different from the previous one?

Potter: I think the previous assembly addressed itself to some burning concerns, like those of development, of the poorer peoples of the world and the whole question of racism and so on. We have faced these issues during these years and we have discovered the deep underlying causes behind them. And these require a much more profound understanding and also far more courage to tackle them. Therefore it's been far less easy for us to indulge in rhetoric and in grand resolutions because we have found that in all our societies we are facing these issues.

Narrator: How do you envisage the next assembly to be different from this one—if there *is* to be a next one?

Potter: I think there *will* be another assembly. I think also that by the time that assembly meets in 1982, we will be faced with new decisions around the world. We do not know whether in these next seven years the whole economic system of our world will not break down. And we may be faced with a much more critical situation than we have now, unless some miracles take place. And therefore I think that in these next seven years the churches, if they are to continue to be the body of Christ in the world called to bring the message of the Gospel into the situation and called to be *doers* of the word, then they'll have to be much more deeply involved. And I think the issues will be even more urgent than they are this time.

(By Courtesy of Reformed Press Service No. 134, 1976)

Ecumenical Christian Fellowship, Bellary

With a view to make the Mission of the Church, in Bellary, real and practical, the Ecumenical Christian Fellowship, Bellary, was constituted with Dr. J. Mamala (of C.S.I.) as President and Dr. A. Doraiswamy (of C.S.I.) as Treasurer. Mr. G. Francis Xavier (of R. C. Church) Headmaster, St. John's High School, Fort Bellary is the Secretary of the Fellowship.

The activities of the Fellowship began with a seminar sponsored by the CISRS in July 1973 on the Socio-Economic changes in the country that have taken place since Independence and the role of the church. The noted economist Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao, M.P. was the main speaker.

The sequel of the seminar was a Christian Festival in December 1973. A noted dance party from Madras was invited to give a benefit performance in one of the theatres in Bellary. An exhibition and amusement park for two days was arranged in the composite Wardlaw Junior College compound. The proceeds of the festival about rupees fifteen thousand was distributed among the social and educational institutions of the Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

During the Christmas week in 1974 a novel experiment was conducted by the Fellowship. A printed Christmas message was carried by the active members of the Fellowship to about twenty selected homes of the Hindus and Muslims. At each house visited the Bible was read and prayers were offered. The party had a very cordial reception at all the homes. The main object of this experiment was to foster a close spiritual fellowship among all the communities.

In April 1975 from the 11th to the 13th The Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield arranged for a conference in Bellary on 'Education for Liberation'. The three-day conference was attended by Educationists in Bellary. The conference endorsed the need for a complete change in the educational system in the country to suit the growth of socialism and democracy.

To make the local Christians understand The Mission of the church a seminar was arranged by the Ecumenical Christian Fellowship, Bellary on the 13th and 14th of December 1975 with the active co-operation and help of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore. The theme for the Seminar was 'The life and Mission of the local congregation'. There were a hundred delegates from the Roman Catholic and

Protestant congregations. Prof. Devaprasad of Madras conducted the Bible Studies. The speakers were Mr. G. R. Karat, Associate Director, CISRS, Bangalore and Mr. Paul Siromani of the Industrial Team, St. Mark's Cathedral, Bangalore.

After each talk there were group discussions. The steering committee constituted at the seminar brought out the following suggestions for the involvement of the local congregations in the Mission of the Church.

1. Each Church to take a survey of the condition of the people in its immediate neighbourhood.
2. Each Church to have a list of Christians of all churches who are working in Government departments. They could then refer poor or uneducated people who have to deal with those particular offices to those who could help them.
3. Each Church to make itself familiar with the facilities of the social welfare department so that it can advise people who need help.
4. Educational institutions be encouraged to bring the needs of the poor children in their institutions to the notice of the church so that the church leaves to care for the children who are its responsibility.
5. Medical workers be requested to inform the church if they have patients who need help. The youth groups be asked to make a list of young people who are willing to be blood donors for poor and needy patients.
6. To bring to the notice of Christians and other friends involved in political work cases of injustice for help in fighting social injustice.
7. To request congregations to make church unity their major concern and work and pray for it.
8. Small groups of Christians who are ready and willing to be the spearhead of change be helped to study their faith and its relation to society.

The Ecumenical Christian Fellowship, Bellary, with God's help proposes to implement some, if not all of the practical suggestions. Proposals have been put forward to organise the Ecumenical Christian Fellowship, Bellary on sound lines so that it may be an instrument for making the local church to get involved actively in the Mission of the church and be a real and practical witness to the revelation of God through Christ.

P. L. SAMUEL.

A Memorial to Bishop Elliott

The plan to have this Memorial at Bishop Elliott's old school, Trent College near Nottingham, was sponsored by Dr. Anthony Hanson, who worked in Bishop Elliott's diocese and whose son, Andrew, is now a pupil at Trent College.

The Memorial took the form on an altar frontal, beautifully made by the Embroidery Workshop of Derby Cathedral. In the centre was the Dornakal Cross.

The Dedication took place at the School Eucharist on Sunday 7th December. In his sermon, based on Mark 10:42-45, Bishop Hollis told how Anthony Elliott went to India from Ireland in 1912, the year of Bishop Azariah's consecration, and worked under him in the area which became the Dornakal Diocese.

He was consecrated Assistant Bishop in 1935 and, when Bishop Azariah died in 1945, succeeded him as Bishop of Dornakal. At the Inauguration of C.S.I. in 1947 he was given charge of the new diocese which included a sizeable section of Methodists.

He drew together the two traditions and in 1955, when he moved to the Krishna Diocese, was succeeded by a former Methodist, Bishop Solomon. When Bishop Elliott retired in 1958, he was succeeded in the Krishna Diocese by Bishop Ananda Rao Samuel. Both these bishops became Moderators of C.S.I.

Bishop Elliott stayed in India until he died, some five years ago, at the age of 80. He was never one to care about his own importance but, by allowing colleagues to exercise responsibility trained them in leadership and helped them to become what they afterwards became. Bishop Hollis closed his sermon with a quotation from one who worked with Bishop Elliott; 'He was one of the saintliest and most lovable men I have ever known.'

After the Creed, Dr. Hanson presented the frontal which was received and, after spreading on the altar, dedicated by Bishop Hollis 'In thankful memory of the life of Anthony Elliott, Bishop, former pupil of this college....'

N. C. SARGANT
Bishop

Letters to the Editor

NOT INCOMPATIBLE WITH CHRISTIAN FAITH

Sir,

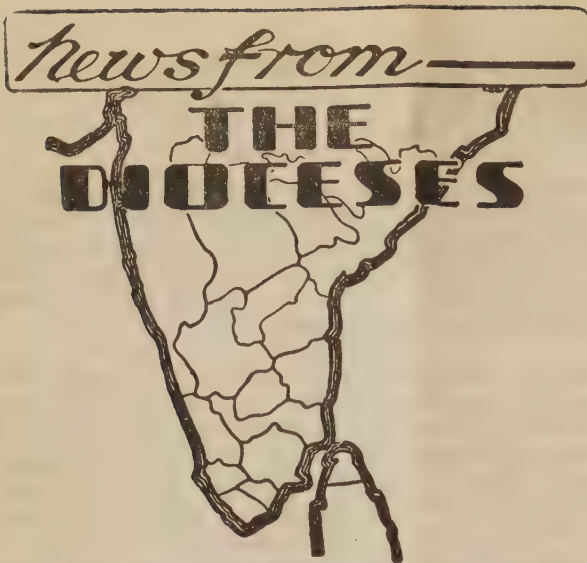
I entirely agree with the views expressed by Mrs. C. S. Paul in her article under the heading 'Not Incompatible with Christian Faith', published in your January issue.

Wearing Thali, flowers, pottu etc. adds beauty to Indian women in addition to conveying some information to others about the status of the girl or woman concerned. In many cases of baptisms in some Dioceses, the presbyter does not put cross mark on the forehead of the child or adult while being baptized and the question of

erasing the invisible cross mark therefore does not arise in their cases.

With regard to clothes, we should advise many of the South Indian women and girls that exposing the sides and back of the body does not add to their beauty. Although it would be difficult to persuade South Indian women and girls to wear Kudtha etc., they can still wear the saree and choli in such a way as to cover their body without losing the gracious look in their saree. In fact, I know a case where in England, a driver refused to teach driving to an Indian lady because she was not fully covered in her saree.

D. K. DHAS
Kottaram



YOUNGER CLERGY DISCUSS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

By depending on spontaneous impressions and insights no one can understand the dynamics of society. Also, without an understanding of the dynamics of Society no one can perform his or her social responsibilities.

Taking into account of the fact that our pastors rarely get an opportunity to develop a framework to understand the society and its problems the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield, Bangalore had sponsored a conference on social responsibilities from 16th-19th December 1975 for a group of younger clergy from the three C.S.I. Dioceses of Nagercoil, Coimbatore and South Kerala. About fifty of them participated.

Pastors are always with the people through their congregations. They confront social problems. But do they understand these problems in the right perspective? Unemployment, poverty, corruption—all these are real questions facing the congregation and the pastor. But the general trend is to solve these problems on a micro level. Hardly no one looks at these problems as a part of the total social structure and tries to solve them at that level.

The papers presented during the conference emphasised the need for understanding the church as structure functioning in the society, always influencing and being influenced by other social structure. And it was pointed out that theology ought to be understood not only as a matter of ideas but also of economic social and political ideas and structures.

A study of the nature of Indian economy and politics was a part of the conference. The historical evolution of Indian economy was traced to show how India underdeveloped when other colonial powers developed. It was stated that present economic crisis began with impact of British colonization on the Indian economy. The presentation on the character of Indian politics exposed the various groupings of the Indian Society and how they perpetuate the economic inequality.

The need of using the pulpit to educate the people was felt by most of the participants. Pastors felt that the education of the people should be coupled with social work. Mass education, conscientization and active political work were considered as appropriate methods to fulfil their social responsibilities by the pastors.

The Bible Studies conducted by the Rev. M. A. Thomas, Director of Ecumenical Christian Centre were designed to get maximum participation from the delegates.

Ecumenical Christian Centre.

KARNATAKA CENTRAL DIOCESE

Mr. Anand Veeraraj has been appointed full-time Youth Worker w.e.f. 1-1-76 on one year's probation. This is the first time we have been able to make this a full-time appointment, and I trust it will create a new life among the young people in the Churches. He speaks English, Tamil and Kannada and so will be able to communicate in most of the pastorates.

Three months allowances at the rate of emoluments received at the time of death will hereafter be given to the surviving widow of a Presbyterian, whether he be in service or retired.

Revs. F. S. Macwana, Benjamin Dorairaj and J. A. Victor Joshua have been made Presbyterian-in-Charge of their respective Pastorates. We trust this will give them greater opportunities of service.

Channapatna hospital is to be reopened on 1st February with a view to becoming a base for wider development work in the area. For the present it will be managed by the C.S.I. Hospital, Bangalore.

THE RT. REV. K. E. GILL

NORTH KARNATAKA DIOCESE

THE REV. N. I. IGNATIUS

The Rev. N. I. Ignatius (82) retired Priest of the North Kerala Diocese, passed away on 12th December 1975 at his residence at Trichur. The burial service was conducted on 13th December in the All Saints' Church, Trichur where he served for 10 years till his retirement in 1961.

The Rev. N. I. Ignatius was born on 4-8-1894 as the son of Nadakavukaran Ittyachen and Kunjannam of the Chaldean Church. He had his school education at Trichur and University education at St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli. He was a member of his College Football Team. He was ordained as a priest of the Chaldean Syrian Church by Bishop Abimalech and served that church loyally for 13 years, holding many important offices. But he was forced to leave that Church and join the Anglican church on conscience grounds.

The secret of his ministry was his prayer life. He used to come to the Church every day, morning and evening, for prayer and meditation. He had a great sense of cleanliness. He was very particular to see that the church and surroundings were kept clean and spotless. His motto was to worship God in the beauty of holiness. He was very systematic and meticulous in keeping the accounts of the Church. He continued to do this till he was asked to take complete rest two months ago when he had a mild heart attack. He was of the utmost help to all the pastors in charge of the parish where he was residing. His former parishioners remember him with affection as a devoted priest. His life and example inspire us to serve the church and her Master loyally and faithfully wherever we are placed.

REV. K. C. SETH

[FEBRUARY 1976]

CHRISTIAN MISSION IN RECONSTRUCTION—

An Asian Attempt by Choan Seng Song

Published by the Christian Literature Society, Madras.
pp. 276. Price Rs. 18.

This systematic theological discussion of Christian Mission from an Asian perspective should be widely welcomed both in the sending and receiving churches. It is the most outspoken critique of the traditional missions emanating from the well-to-do Western world, and opens up a new exciting challenge to the Asian churches to participate creatively in the Mission of Christ in the spirit and zeal of biblical universalism.

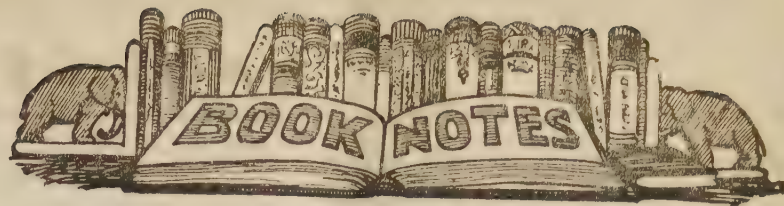
The basic underlying theological principles in the book are the relation between Creation and Redemption, and the story of the Exodus as presaging the Cross, the Resurrection, and the reconciling and liberating power of the Gospel. This interweaving of the Old and New Testaments maintains the continuity of the Biblical revelation without soft-pedalling the writer's conviction that the Word, Who was from the beginning, enlightens every man coming into the world and that God has not left Himself without witness anywhere.

The author begins on a note of celebrating the end of the old era of missions and pleads for 'a Copernican revolution of ideas and practices' (page 2) based on the celebration of God's costly deeds in Christ on behalf of and within all nations.

The main theological premise, as hinted earlier, is the Christian doctrine of Creation as delineated in the Book of Genesis, where 'redemption is seen in the perspective of creation' (page 21). In this perspective the choice of Israel was 'an ecumenical event' (page 22). This is also the basis of 'historical pluralism' and the interplay of varying cultures within the redemptive purposes of God. Such understanding also underlines 'political implication of God's creation' (page 41). 'The power exercised by Cyrus is an extension of the politics of God' (page 46).

The next Chapter is a transition from the doctrine of Creation to the Incarnation which the author describes as the 'Mission of Enfleshment'. 'Jesus Christ is God's being with the world.' He accuses the traditional missions of being a mission of disembodiment, because they limit the redemptive Incarnation within geographical areas; and 'you cannot conduct Christian mission from a mission compound' (page 59). 'Messianism is no monopoly of the Biblical religion' (page 67). The Incarnation demands kenosis, but the traditional missions from the west have operated from the point of strength rather than weakness. They have, therefore, lacked the authenticity of a mission embedded in the Cross and 'the dimension of embracement' (page 78).

Chapter IV deals with the sacramental nature of the Christian Mission. The Lord's Supper is described as an action and not a ceremony. 'The Mission of Jesus Christ is the Sacrament par excellence. This divine mission of Salvation culminates in the Last Supper



during which Jesus Christ, by both words and acts, enacts in advance the drama of the Cross' (p. 100).

Chapter V points to Exodus as the second pivot after Creation as determining the nature of the Christian Mission. Like the people of Israel in Egypt, Jesus also had to flee to Egypt, but He 'accomplished his task by turning the mission of exodus to the mission of the cross' (p. 119). The author discusses at length the emergence of the Black Theology as a direct result of the traumatic experience not unlike that of the people of Israel in Egypt, looking towards liberation. Liberation has therefore now become a touchstone of Christian Mission.

Chapter VI discusses various dimensions of liberation which are so clearly reflected in the Nazareth manifesto recorded in St. Luke 4: 16-21. Christian involvement in struggle for liberation and reconstruction becomes a *sine qua non* of Christian Mission.

Chapter VII grapples with the challenge of Syncretism with which he couples the danger of dogmatism (p. 178), both of which he discards, but finds the answer in the presentation of Christ as 'personal truth' (p. 200).

Chapter VIII deals with one of the pressing issues in theological debate, namely the relation of Salvation with humanisation. The author frequently quotes from Barth's 'Humanity of God' in Christ, Who has overcome estrangement between God and man, and man and man. 'God humanized Himself to bring humanization into the world' (p. 217). Reconciliation therefore is the obvious dimension of Christian Mission. 'It is through the Church reformed, reconciled and reconciling, that Christian Mission gains integrity' (p. 236).

The last Chapter ends on a note of hope for Christian Mission which stems from the resurrection event. . . . 'Christian Mission becomes a mission of hope as it seeks to give witness to Christ's presence in solidarity with the rest of humanity. This thrusts Christian Mission right into the world of realities. It seeks the acts of God not inside the Church but outside the Church. And in its solidarity with humanity in suffering and joy, in hate and love, in death and life, it becomes the real witness to the incarnation which is nothing other than God's oneness with man' (p. 272).

The book seems to be overloaded with criticism of the traditional missions, and although it throws hints as to the lines Christian Mission in Asia should take, it lacks in giving a coherent statement of what the Asian approach to Christian Mission should be. This might have been done in a closing chapter. Obviously it is addressed to policy makers and not to the man in the pew who must eventually carry the mission of Christ to his fellow men. It is interesting to note that such a commendable effort should have come from a Far Eastern source. Perhaps the Church in India needs a similar traumatic experience to give birth to such an attempt so badly needed at this time of God's visitation.

✠ JOHN W. SADIQ.

NOTICES

BISHOP PRYOR SCHOLARSHIP FOR INDIAN CHRISTIAN STUDENTS

(Established in Honour of Bishop Thomas M. Pryor, Formerly a Resident Bishop of the United Methodist Church in the Chicago Area.)

THE BISHOP PRYOR SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE invites applications from deserving Christian students for financial help for the academic year July 1976-June 1977. The Scholarship Committee will grant twenty-five half and full scholarships for room, board, tuition, books and stationeries for a ten-month period. The scholarships will be granted for ninth class through postgraduate education and vocational/technical training in India. No distinctions will be made in granting scholarships by denomination, relationship to clergy, or region (north or south). Our objective is to provide scholarships to all deserving Indian Christian students.

APPLICATIONS FOR THE BISHOP PRYOR SCHOLARSHIP ARE DUE IN INDIA LIAISON OFFICE by March 15, 1976. Final decisions will be made by the Scholarship Selection Committee, whose decisions are final. Recipients will be notified by mail by June 30, 1976. Where possible, BISHOP PRYOR SCHOLARS will be expected to work on college campuses in leadership capacities.

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THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE

March 5, 1976

It is hereby notified for general information that copies of printed programme of the World Day of Prayer Service for March 5, 1976, in different languages can be had from :—

1. Rev. J. P. G. Mondrella, In English
Secretary, North India Tract &
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2. Mr. P. Baskey, Santali
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7. Mrs. K. K. George, Malayalam
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Tiruvalla P. O.,
Kerala State.

Correspondence for obtaining copies of the Programme may be done directly with the above persons. Collections of World Day of Prayer be sent to Mrs. K. K. George, Executive Secretary, Theological Literature Committee, C.L.S., Tiruvalla, Kerala.

I. SANT MOSIH,
Adams Girls' Hostel,
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Secretary for Women's
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[FEBRUARY 1976]

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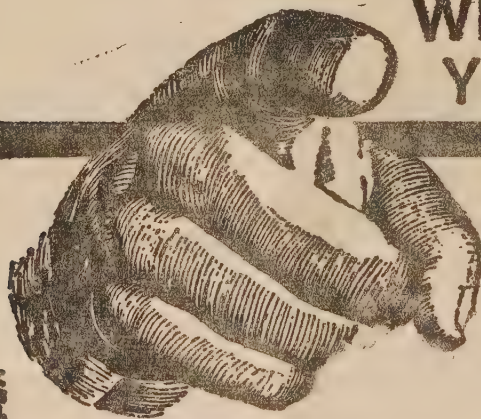
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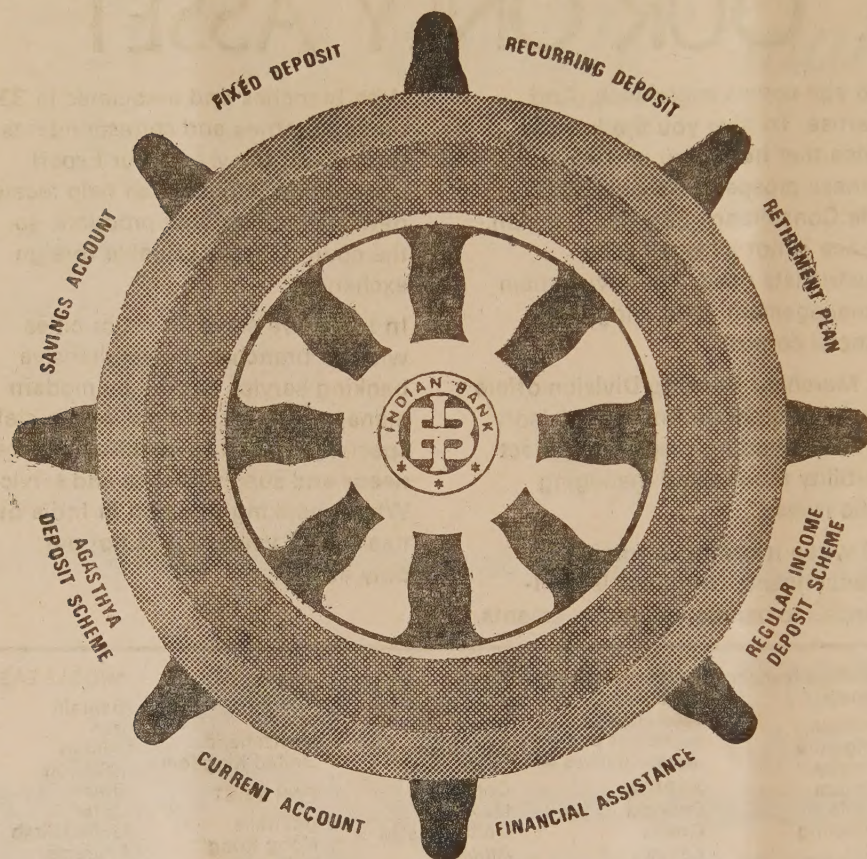
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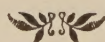
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